

New edition marks complete rewrite

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Guidebooks are a funny thing, they are exceedingly useful, but like fruit, they can have a shelf life, and to keep these books fresh requires ongoing revisions. Those can range from simple edits right up to complete rewrites, changing the book dramatically.

Such is the case of the third edition of the *Classic Hikes in the Canadian Rockies: A Canadian Rockies Companion Guide* by Graeme Pole. In the seven years since the second edition of this guidebook and the 17 years since the first edition, hiking and backpacking and the trails these activities occur on have seen a lot of change, which opened the door for Pole to give *Classic Hikes* a new round of polish.

"I love the opportunity to revise my work, some authors hate it but in the second edition, something I wrote in 100 words I edited down to 85 words," he said. Since the first and second editions, Pole said it was time for a complete revision as the second edition was essentially a "drag and drop" version of the first. In that time numerous trail details change on both a small level, such as bridges or trailheads, or on a landscape level that include rock falls, forest fires and travel restrictions.

Along with tightening the text and searching for ways to better inform hikers and backpackers, Pole reinserted the historical quotes that had been cut from the second edition, added five new hikes (including Ha Ling Peak and Prairie View) and included a colour-coded thumbnail wildflower identification guide.

He also reduced the size of the photographs throughout the book, while not reducing the number, in the effort to provide more space for sidebars and other additions.

And as far as photographs go, Pole said he took pains to avoid including shots of the best views, instead preferring allowing hikers to make their own discoveries. "I don't put the bomber view in, so I still want people to have that 'wow' experience," he said.

Pole also removed five hikes that are in the *Walks and Easy Hikes in the Canadian Rockies*, which he hopes to re-release in the next year or so or that are no longer viable or appropriate routes given environmental sensitivity.

"I'm still reminding people of what goes on with our being here individually or collectively and some of the management issues," he said.

As part of that environmental message, Pole approached famed Canadian wildlife artist and environmentalist Robert Bateman to pen the foreword. “It was such a gift and he’s such an environmentally aware person advocating for species and taking care of the planet. I was drawn to him and he was very giving,” Pole said.

In the foreword, Bateman stated hiking can be an antidote to the malaise of youth spending far too many hours in front of electronic screens,, lost in entertainment rather than grounded in the real world.

Hiking and spending time outside, Bateman wrote “this book helps to create that reality by describing pathways that provide points of contact with, and appreciation for, resident species and natural processes”.

As part of Pole’s Canadian Rockies Companion Guide series, which also includes the *Canadian Rockies Explorer*, the author set out to create a useful, informative and attractive, colourful book without it becoming too busy as to be awkward.

It’s a delicate balance to achieve that, but Pole, who has written 11 books over the past 20 years, has the experience and understanding to juggle the numerous different elements without it becoming cumbersome.

For novice hikers or experienced backpackers, *Classic Hikes in the Canadian Rockies* is an excellent option if you plan on taking only one book.

This guidebook also contains a gear checklist and plenty of good, practical advice – including about bears, etiquette and equipment that backcountry travellers of all stripes would do well to review.

While the retail price of \$27.95 may put *Classic Hikes* in a higher price bracket than some of its companions, the content, including the full-colour photographs, maps and coding, and the information Pole presents, which draws from his numerous years of experience in the Rockies ensures the cost is in fact good value.